

North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Melissa Murphy, my chief of staff, who recently moved on to a great opportunity working for Duke Energy of South Carolina.

After a decade and a half of service here in our Nation's capital, Melissa decided it was time to leave her work here in the U.S. House and head back home. Melissa started her career on Capitol Hill working for her home State of South Carolina in Congressman JOE WILSON's office. There, she worked her way up to deputy chief of staff before joining my team when I was elected to Congress in 2014. As my first hire and chief of staff, she helped me assemble an outstanding team, and she helped me build a culture for an office that has accomplished much.

Melissa has always been a trusted advisor and a great friend to many. Throughout her career on Capitol Hill, she served as a mentor and friend to many staffers far beyond my office. She is always there for her colleagues or anyone else searching for advice or assistance.

As every Member of Congress knows, nothing would get done in this place without the dedicated service of our staff who are always working behind the scenes. Melissa's advice, experience, and hard work have all played a large role in helping me to represent the 7th Congressional District in North Carolina to the very best of my ability.

I congratulate and thank Melissa for her many years of congressional service and for leading our team during my first three-and-a-half terms. May God always bless her path.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO GARRET AUGUSTUS MORGAN, BESSIE COLEMAN, ARCOLA PHILPOTT, AND BENJAMIN BANNEKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, in the past several months, Democrats have advanced the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, along with, most recently, the COMPETES Act, which will increase American innovation, start making more critical products in America, and turbocharge American scientific and technological leadership.

With those bills in mind, I thought it was particularly important during Black History Month to pay special tribute to four bold, brilliant, and Black minds who have contributed in various ways through their inventions to innovation and to infrastructure in America.

First, let's meet the "Father of Transportation Technology," better known as Garret Augustus Morgan. Born in Paris, Kentucky, and later moved to Ohio, Morgan was a Black American inventor. Witnessing a fatal

car crash was essentially the catalyst in Morgan's invention of the three-position traffic signal, which is the predecessor to the modern-day traffic light. Though the stop-and-go signals had already existed, Morgan advanced the invention to include a third position that stopped traffic in both directions and allowed pedestrians to safely cross the road. Talented as he was, Morgan's other inventions included a version of the gas mask, grooming products, sewing machines, and much more.

Madam Speaker, a second inspiration was a Black American, better known as "Brave Bessie," and to others as "Queen Bess." The sky was anything but the limit to this Texas native, Bessie Coleman. Fueled by rejections and constant noes, Coleman's determination and diligence allowed her to soar as she was accepted into the Caudron Brothers' School of Aviation in France, and earned her international pilot's license on June 15, 1921.

Becoming the first African-American woman pilot in 1922, Coleman was best known for performing tricks in the air in both the United States and Europe. She passionately encouraged other women to learn to fly, both figuratively and literally, by touring the country, giving lectures, teaching flight lessons, and performing flight exhibitions.

A real go-getter was Arcola Philpott, who earned her place in transportation history in 1944 when the Los Angeles Railway hired Philpott to be the first Black woman streetcar operator. Philpott opened the door for both women and African Americans to operate streetcars in Los Angeles. Just weeks after hiring her, Los Angeles Railway hired its first Black motorman. Philpott's time as the first Black and streetcar operator represents just a small portion of the impact she had.

Originally from Chicago, she graduated from Loyola University with a degree in social science and performed welfare work prior to moving to Los Angeles. When she returned to Chicago, she worked as a nurse and a researcher at the University of Chicago's history department.

And finally, Benjamin Banneker, the Black architect who helped design the capital city. Banneker was hired by the first President, George Washington, and came highly recommended by Thomas Jefferson. He designed the layout of Washington, D.C.'s, streets, parks, major buildings in two days. Known for many well-deserved accomplishments and contributions through his lifetime, he later became a reputable architect, mathematician, engineer, and even an astronomer.

Black people should be proud of their heritage, and all Americans should celebrate the achievements of Black Americans. Infrastructure within the United States would look incredibly different without the inventions, achievements, and innovations of these Black minds. It is important to document and share stories of lesser-known

historical figures who also contributed their greatest efforts. Happy Black History Month.

U.S. PARK POLICE MODERNIZATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor our brave law enforcement officers at the United States Park Police. From every major protest to every parade that occurs on the National Mall, our Park Police officers answer the call to keep our constituents safe when they are visiting here in the Nation's capital.

However, due to an increase in the number of demonstrations and the fact that they are extremely understaffed, one of our Nation's oldest uniformed Federal law enforcement agencies is now stretched extremely thin.

As of March 1, 2021, there were fewer than 500 Park Police officers. That is significantly lower than the minimum requirement they have of 639 officers. This is alarming, and obviously, among other concerns, this leaves the Nation's most historic landmarks extremely vulnerable. And that is why today, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3924, the U.S. Park Police Modernization Act.

And what is the problem? Why are they facing the issues that they are facing? Well, the bottom line, for whatever reason, is because the pay and benefits are much lower for the Park Police than for other Federal law enforcement agencies. And the big question is why is that the case? That is an outstanding question. Why?

There is no real good reason. And it is for that reason that we, here in Congress, need to immediately improve the Park Police's pay and benefits and to put that agency on equal footing with other similar departments. To do so would incentivize officers to both join the Park Police, but even more importantly, to stay. Both of those issues are huge concerns right now. That is how we will ensure that Washington, D.C., the place where each of us work, the place where our staff works, and obviously, where many of our constituents come to visit, remain safe for years to come.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3924. Let's put our U.S. Park Police on equal footing with other law enforcement agencies in this area so that they can do the job that we all depend upon them to do.

GUN VIOLENCE IS RUNNING RAMPANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I rise today because my district is hurting. Washington Heights-Inwood is